

being lifted they vomited a clear oil. This seems to be the experience of every one. I was told that they breed on the Cyanean rocks (the Symplegades) at the Black-Sea entrance to the Bosphorus. I planned an expedition to these rocks, but was unable to carry it into execution.

There is plenty of ground and opportunity in Turkey for a sporting ornithologist. Wildfowl are plentiful, and comparatively tame. There are Snipes and Woodcocks in all suitable localities. Two officers of Engineers, who went on a surveying expedition previous to the arrival of the allied troops, told me that they saw abundance of Grey and Red-legged Partridges and Bustards not far from Gallipoli, also quantities of wildfowl near Buyuk Chekmedji and along the Maritza river and near the Gulf of Enos.

XXVIII.—*On the Nidification of certain Indian Birds.* Part I.

By ANDREW ANDERSON, F.Z.S.

BURNESIA LEPIDA, Blyth, = *Malurus gracilis*, Rüppell (according to Blyth)*.

I first became acquainted with this interesting little bird in April 1871; but although it was far from uncommon, I found it very local, and confined entirely to the tamarisk-covered islands and "churs" along the Ganges. From dissections made it was evident that these birds were then breeding: and any doubts there may have been on this score were speedily removed; for shortly afterwards I saw young fledgelings being fed by the parent birds. I need hardly say that the acquisition of the nest and eggs of this diminutive bird was looked forward to with no small degree of pleasure; but, unfortunately, it was then too hot for me to work at the subject personally, and the matter was left in the hands of my native collectors, with the usual unsatisfactory results.

This season, having returned from my cold-weather tour somewhat earlier than usual, I devoted my mornings to exploring the islands, determined to become possessed of this desideratum; but fresh difficulties had to be overcome. Not only had the river

* Cf. Blyth's "Identifications of Synonymy," Ibis, 1865, p. 44.

changed its course, but the favourite haunts of the Thao Warblers had been washed away by the late unprecedented heavy rains. This added to the distance I had to travel before productive hunting-ground could be reached, which, with the delay in crossing the river &c., left me only two hours for actual collecting, notwithstanding I frequently got up at 2 A.M.

Under these circumstances any great success was hardly to be expected; and the acquisition of two nests has been the sole result of my exertions. But these, I pride myself, are unique, so far as Indian-taken specimens are concerned; another week and it would have been again too late. The first nest was taken on the 13th of March last, and contained three well-incubated eggs; of these I saved only one specimen, which is now in the collection of Mr. Brooks. The second was found on the following day, and contained two callow young and one perfectly fresh egg. In both cases one of the parent birds was shot off the nest, so that the eggs have been thoroughly identified.

In its actions, habits, and nest-architecture *B. lepida* resembles the true *Drymæca*. The nest is domed over, having an entrance at the side; and the cavity is comfortably lined, or rather felted, with the down of the madar plant. It is fixed somewhat after the fashion of that of the Reed-Warbler, in the centre of a dense clump of surput grass, about two feet above the ground. On the whole, the structure is rather large for so small a bird, and measures six inches in height by four in breadth.

But while the *nest* corresponds exactly with Canon Tristram's description* of those taken by him in Palestine, there are differences, oologically speaking, which induce me to hope that our Indian bird may yet be restored to specific distinction. In the first place, my single eggs from each nest have a *green* ground-colour, and are covered all over with reddish-brown spots. Now Mr. Tristram describes his Palestine specimens as "richly coloured *pink* eggs, with a zone of darker red near the larger end, and in shape and colour resembling some of the *Prinia*-group." Is it possible for the same bird to lay such widely different eggs? If I had taken only one specimen, it might have been looked upon

* Tristram, on the Ornithology of Palestine, P. Z. S. 1864, p. 437; Ibis, 1865, pp. 82, 83.

